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Children's Foreign Literature

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ONE MAY say and perhaps rightly, "Why foreign literature, when no library, public or private, has enough native books to supply the needs of our children?"

The most perfect answer to that question would be a visit to the children's room of the New York Public Library and an afternoon spent in turning over the lovely books from all countries that have sent their people to make our people.

Without knowing a word of their language, the picture books that are so alive and so beautiful would give us new understanding and respect for their makers. And if they do that for us what more can they do for the children who are fresher and more open to impressions than we are and so more apt to benefit by what the books have to give! And of course in our schools and public libraries it is especially important to have some of the lovely books in the native languages of the parents or grand parents because we have learned that by fostering respect and reverence for the best in their parents' native countries we can cultivate appreciation and respect for the children's native country.

Then too it is such a pity for the children to lose their parents' language. Besides the better understanding that comes from the ability to talk the parents' native

tongue there is a certain mental dexterity in being able to express thought in two languages, and so far, in this dexterity, the Europeans have a very distinct advantage over us. If we had cherished instead of losing the various mother tongues that came to us we could all take our places at world tables today with much greater assurance of interested and helpful participation in discussions.

So let us by all means have the foreign books when we can get them and let us begin with the picture books. Pictures are a universal language and they are the main part of any foreign collection of books for children.

All countries seem to blossom in picture books. A collection of them is a kaleidoscope of color that reflects the life and art of the people who produced them and tells of their love and understanding of children.

But there seemed to be one European country that produced few picture books. That was Italy, and I wondered why, for one always thinks of Italy as the home of all the arts. I had never been in Italy but I had seen Italian children in our public libraries going straight to any bit of beauty that appeared with perfectly spontaneous and unaffected enjoyment, and they are among the greatest lovers of picture books.

Then last summer I went to Italy and

I thought I began to understand. The first day I sat on the steps of a museum high above the street and watched the street go by me. It was all noisy and full of color, and both consciously and unconsciously dramatic. A peasant delivering his produce will have very small donkey and a very large horse hitched together with a high yoke topped by a red tassel and probably, a bell. They make a nice amusing spectacle. Along comes a laundress with a huge bundle of clothes balanced on her head. When she sees that I am looking at her with interest she begins to turn around and take little side steps just to show that she can, and as quick as a wink she is followed by three small boys who mimic her every motion. She smiles at me, pretending not to notice the youngsters and by this time she has passed and is walking sedately again and the boys have gone off to their own performances. But we all have been taken into the pageant. The Italians and their children are busy making living pictures of every-day living — they have not so much need of picture books in covers. They are surrounded by beauty at every turn, an insistent beauty that demands and receives full homage—they live intimately with their mountains. When they hung those tiny villages on the sides of the mountains, there may have been a prosaic defense reason, but they really put them there because they loved the heights and did not mind the climbing if it gave them a beautiful view at the end.

And the Renaissance painters and sculptors have so filled Italy with pictures and carvings and statues that every smallest village has its own special beauty and every villager, large or small, knows it and feels the pride of ownership in it. Living their pictures as they do, it is small wonder that their picture books are comparatively few and that a good part of them are collections of folk songs and games that presuppose an active part in their users.

One could stop to moralize over this active rather than passive participation in the enjoyment of beauty, but we are looking through a collection of picture books

and we must go North now, where wider spaces make for greater loneliness, where the people have so much less color out of doors, where the climate confines them indoors so much of the time and where they naturally develop the folk arts and you see picture books for children cropping up everywhere.

In Russia right now the books have a very utilitarian cast—they're all supposed to teach how to sleep, eat, walk, work, play,—any and all human activities and how to conduct them are being shown by means of picture books. Most of them are very solemn, some are gaily beautiful and a few are comic, like the one that showed a fussy looking grand dame starting on a train journey with a very small and evidently pampered dog. She gave the dog to the train man with great reluctance. The train man was a jolly soul and at the next station the pet dog ran away out of sight. But the man acquired a weird looking mongrel about five times the size of the original and attached it to the pet dog's chain. Time went on—and on—and finally came the end of the journey with the grand dame protesting that that was not her Fido — the train man deprecating, "But Madame, it was a *very long* journey. The little dog has grown, is it not?"

Even the solemn Soviets who must make a new world stop to have fun with the children. Most of these books are very cheap, many are beautifully printed and all are within the reach of very simple pocket-books. I wish we could say as much for ours.

From Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, France and England we have lovely, characteristic books that are available in many cases in English translations also.

It is impossible to characterize books or people in a sentence or two but we find in the central European picture books the most gorgeous flat color, beauty of design that is like the peasant embroideries, homely living, a mysticism that speaks familiarly of gods and devils as of a man's soul or of his dog or his farm. They are quite

Speech, a Social Problem

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I AM talking to you today not as one who knows, but as one who wonders. I am a speech teacher who is not positive and in that sense am perhaps a wonder.

I have traveled, for example, a long distance from the absolute standards of my mother. She was educated in Spingler Institute in New York City, under Gorham D. Abbott, uncle of Lyman Abbott, editor of *THE OUTLOOK* in the days that were and are no more, and brother of Jacob Abbott, who wrote those charming histories that could be read with impunity by young ladies. There could be for example, in Jacob Abbott's *LIFE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH*, nothing more tactful than his reflections on the worth in society of unmarried gentlewomen, reflections brought forth by the need of referring to Queen Elizabeth's unmarried state.

The motto of my mother's class of 1853 was "That our daughters may be cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace." But today palaces are crashing down—their similitude, disorder and ruin. My mother might say, as she did in her later days, when trained nurses were needed.

"If I must have a trained nurse, see that she speaks English. I will not take pills from a person who doesn't." But the fact remains that persons who know little of the king's English can administer pills very well.

The first point that I want to make under my topic, "Speech, A Social Problem," is perhaps a plea rather than a point—a plea that we protect our young people from the sin of snobbishness. Snobbishness is an instinct as old as the race, and as powerful as fear. It is not confined to

the rich man or the aristocrat. Tom the Toothless Wonder, whose teeth were knocked out in a tavern brawl, whose father was a Pennsylvania miner, and whose mother was a household slattern, was no less a snob for laughing at me, born of a New England father and a New York mother, for laughing at my unaccustomed speech and mannered ways, than was I for so detesting the toughness of his talk and his entire lack of manners. As a result we never came to human understanding and Tom must be set down in my long list of failures. What teacher is there who hasn't such a list waiting for him against the Judgment Day, a list swollen because of intolerance provoked by trifles?

Snobbishness is a tendency to find in unlikeness an implicit criticism of our own pattern and to protect our pattern or our kind by the assumption that there is little of value behind the unfamiliar and much of evil. The small barbarian in the public school of a large city who hoots at the speech and manners of a private school boy suddenly injected into new surroundings by "The Great Depression" is no less a snob than the private school youngsters who proceed to ostracize the foreigner's son who has quaint ways of speech, and enthusiasms different from their own.

In the field of utterance there is more danger of developing snobbishness than in almost any other field of education. Ought we not teach our young people to respect differences? "She said *in'-quiry* didn't she? She should have said *in-quir'y* shouldn't she?" "Did you understand what she meant?" "Yes." "Was she correct in her statement?" "I guess so." "Then from her point of view *in'-quiry* did its job. The fine thing is that she had some-

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thing to say and that she said it unafraid of pronunciation. I can tell you that is a great deal better than what you do when you dodge the right word to express your thought because you are not sure whether the stress is on the first or the second syllable." We know many a child has done this and many a teacher has been responsible because his teaching lacked a sense of proportion.

There is a Jewish psychiatrist in New York with a great part to play in aiding the handicapped. He says *becaus* for *because*. His audiences freeze against him after he has talked for five minutes; they say "We can't stand listening to him, his speech is so poor!" They have listened to his speech, but they have not listened to his thought or to him with that union of mind and spirit, yes, and of critical evaluation of content which are the attributes of the good listener. Far more than this psychiatrist needs training in speech do his audiences need training in an understanding of relative values. Now that the campaign is over, may we not admit that there is something rather admirable in the fact that Alfred E. Smith continues to say *raddio*, refusing to cripple the keenness of his thinking by dividing his attention between his message and his manner of delivering it? May we and may our young people be protected from the sin of snob-bishness! An extraordinary thing is the willingness of people who know so little about it to criticize speech. Two principles I should like recognized in every school in the country: First, the one we have been discussing, that the essence of a thing is of more value than its container, that the thought is of more importance than the word. This is the principle of tolerance. The second is the principle that we must train our teachers and our young people to hear speech, before giving them the right to discuss the proprieties of speech; speech as it is spoken, I mean, not speech as it is spelled.

All speech is interesting when it is submitted to the analysis of a phonetically trained ear. The stranger the specimen in

fact, the greater the delight in hearing it. A lateral lisp in a sentence such as "He's gone into the selling business," is a precious instance of the use of the Welsh unvoiced *l* in the speech of an unhappy American lisper who has had no more Welsh influence in his life than the loss of a premolar or the paralysis of one side of his tongue. But this is an exotic instance.

Take the word *gentleman* which in this day of fallen palaces has gone somewhat into the discard, but which showed strange modification in pronunciation even before the great war. Before we attempt to teach any given pronunciation of this word, it is important to train a child to hear how he pronounces it and how others do. When he knows all the substitutions and omissions involved in the following pronunciations *genman*, *gentman*, *gendman*, *gentlman*, you can leave to his own judgment and with a reasonable degree of safety, which he will choose.

There is a pleasant story of a teacher who was exposed for the first time to a phonetic analysis of her speech. Such an analysis is ruthless in the way it strips off all implications of spelling and reveals a word as it is actually uttered. In her annoyance she cried out, "That's not true. I *alwiz* say *always*." The phonetician had been making the point that teachers often profess to pronounce a word in a certain way—a way strongly influenced by spelling, but when off-guard utter it quite differently, and that in nine cases out of ten, the off-guard way is the correct way and the labored utterance mere "pedageese" as a friend of mine calls professions of fine speech in the mouths of pedagogues who are conscientious but without phonetic knowledge of their mother tongue.

When anyone has learned to distinguish all the vowel sounds in the English language, quite apart from their letter names, and to make them himself, when he has learned to distinguish all the consonant sounds and their variations as they occur in different combinations and in different places in a sentence, when he has heard how words blend with one another under

the domination of thought until all the words in a phrase have become as one thought-word, when he has heard connectives such as *and* and the relative *that* and the article *the* becoming inconspicuous in thought-compelled speech as safety pins or stitches should be in our attire, when he hears clearly without prejudice by spelling, he is ready to choose what speech he will, and he is usually ready to choose wisely.

The first thing I hope he will do, will be to keep speech a servant of society and not a master. Tolerance for the speech of others and simplicity in his own speech will be the result.

When I speak of speech, I mean more than the utterance of its articulate elements. I mean its rate of utterance, its melodies formed by the variations of pitch occurring in inflections and by the changes in key in the shifts from thought to thought. I mean quality of tone; I mean voice itself. There should be ear training for all these elements of speech until a student recognizes them not only in the speech of others but in his own speech.

The third point I want to make is the need of presenting to our young people the idea that there are a number of dialects of English in good standing. I believe we should try to get men and women of culture and education from all parts of the country, and from England as well, to speak in our schools, with some preparation beforehand of the young people for the idea that they are to hear a speech form unlike their own, but as acceptable in other regions as their speech is acceptable in their locality. With trained ears the young people will listen with intelligence, and with prepared spirits, they will listen with friendliness.

All that I have said is in favor of a kind of "other-mindedness in speech." I have always remembered, however, a phrase in a book whose title I have long since forgotten. "Pale people who understand everything and who do nothing." Are there no positive criteria for which we may work in our schools? Would anyone object to wholesome voices? Are we

not all committed to the principle of a sound mind in a sound body, and if so, are healthy vocal cords not a part of our health program? I can think of no institution from the point of view of geographical distribution, or vocational purpose, where, if time could be found in the curriculum and the authorities persuaded that the teacher knew his job, training in the right use of voice would be frowned upon. To carry the load of speaking on the diaphragm and not on the vocal cords, to reduce muscularity by increasing resonance, to possess the whole gamut of vocal modulations so that earnestness may be expressed for example, by a still small voice, as well as by a shout, not through manipulation but through an automatic coordination of mind and voice, to be, in short, in possession of our full vocal faculties, is to insure vocal health, expressiveness and a sympathetic hearing. Whatever the dialect, a voice that comes out of a kindly considerate heart, directed by the processes of thinking and given right physical support, commends itself to any social order. I am interested in the teaching of voice because I believe it is one of the ways of integrating the whole personality.

There is a relationship between voice and dialect. Many singers will tell you they like best to sing in Italian because Italian vowels and consonants lend themselves to open flowing tones. For the same reason, the artists of the platform and the stage prefer some dialects of English to others, because there are more open vowels and less consonant interference. Any school teaching the arts of speech would have to set up such a dialect as its standard, so that its graduates, pursuing their careers in all English speaking countries might carry their message of beauty.

This dialect is a kind of international English toward which almost unconsciously, educated people, if they are widely traveled and internationally minded, tend. Is there perhaps an advantage in a speech which does not proclaim its sectionalism? At the outset of this paper, I spoke of the right of an adult to his own speech form

if it remains within the bounds of intelligibility, and of the need of training youngsters to give fair hearing to the unaccustomed. But despite my conviction that the force of a man's message should not be lessened because of the speech form that he uses, I think it unfair to our young people not to give them sufficient flexibility of speech to enable them to choose the speech form they desire. The ear training that I have advocated is the basic step. Training in the ability to use the best native dialect as distinguished from the illiterate or the lazy, every school owes its students. Respectful familiarity with other speech forms than those of the region, a school should instill in its young people. This obligation it can fulfil with phonograph records if it cannot summon living men and women to its platform. Some practice, for the sheer fun of it, in unaccustomed forms of English utterance, is part of the process of ear training. What are the results we can count upon?

1. For all our students increased intelligence in hearing English and ability to discriminate.
2. Some slight bi-lingualism, because to the accustomed speech of each will be added the modified form of the classroom.
3. The capacity to master a new speech form for habitual use if economic or social pressure makes this necessary.
4. The ability to swing back into a regional form of speech, whenever that is the quickest way to enter into the heart of the situation.
5. No change whatsoever, or practically none, in a student who as a student sees no value in speech training, and who as an adult is committed to the policy of carrying his region to the world rather than of bringing the world to his door.

May I enlarge slightly on points 3 and 4? I am under the impression that the greatest value of speech training in the school is not the determination for a young person of the way in which he must speak

before he knows what social demands are to be put upon him, but the development of the tools of utterance, namely, hearing and flexibility, so that he can carve his own speech as he will when he finds his place in life. While they are still in the schools, we cannot fix the speech of our young people.

I have known students graduating from Hunter with an excellent acquired speech form, to revert to their early type when they found themselves in later life in constant association with people showing a strong Yiddish accent in their English.

I have known students who have consistently held out for their accustomed dialect, although interested in learning to analyze it, changing easily and suddenly to a much finer form when they found themselves teaching in a school where none but the finest type of English would be accepted, or trying to enter a little theatre group where commonplace English was not acceptable, or entering a business firm that insisted on fine personality and speech in its staff.

We cannot provide our students with their later environment, but we can enable them to react intelligently and graciously to their environment. Out of the heart, the mouth should speak.

In connection with the fourth point, the ability to swing back into a regional form of speech, may I plead for the right to intelligent bi-lingualism. Many a student of mine has been willing to experiment with better speech form than the form she learned at home, because of my willingness to recognize the value of any form that carries meaning, and is a straight path from the mind and the heart of one person to another. In the main, parents are eager to see their children improve, but if to any parent language difference is a barrier, his children should honor him by using the speech form with which he finds himself at home. I come back, you see, again and again to my plea against snobbishness in speech.

Every teacher of English and of speech should, I believe, subject himself to the

The Elementary Speech Program

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THIS suggested curricular unit in speech for elementary schools is but the skeleton of one possible solution of a present problem for discussion, experiment, and research.

Modern education aims to educate the whole child. How much of the whole child and his daily activity is concerned with speech? Does the time allotment in the program of studies for elementary schools provide for training and instruction in speech activities in proportion to the use the child makes of them?

Is a curricular unit in speech justifiable from the points of view of need, service, and efficiency of operation? Are the objectives and aims suggested in the program below valid? Will such a program correlate with the newer methods of individual study and activity units?

Is the assignment of material for each age suitable for the needs and possible use of the child at that age? Are the assignments possible of accomplishment? What topics should be added? What topics should not be included?

It is hoped that the readers of THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW who, by their interest, are competent to criticize and discuss such a program, will suggest freely such changes, omissions, and amendments as will make the speech education of our children more effective.

WHY?

- A. Ultimate Objectives — applied to adult activities.
 - 1. Personality adjustment to social situations.
 - 2. Control of thought processes.
 - 3. Efficiency in human intercourse.

B. Immediate aims—applied to every day life situations.

- 4. Proficiency in speech skills.
 - 1. Adequate functioning of the physical mechanisms for speech.
 - 2. Development of individual personality.
 - 3. Acquisition of good diction and accepted pronunciation.
 - 4. Training in leadership.
 - 5. Effective audience relationships.
 - 6. Techniques needed to influence the behavior of others.
 - 7. Thought expression through freedom of bodily movement.
 - 8. Efficiency in vocal and articulatory expression.
 - 9. Appreciation of literature through the oral interpretation of the printed page.
 - 10. Correlation with all other subjects of study.
 - 11. Preparation for secondary school courses in speech.

WHAT?

- A. Effective delivery:
 - 1. Bodily movement — pantomime—gesture.
 - 2. Voice — appropriate rate, pitch, inflection, intensity, quality.
 - 3. Diction.
 - 4. Pronunciation
 - 5. Correct construction
 - 6. Accepted usage — vocabulary development.
- B. Oral reading:
 - Interpretation of prose, poetry, drama.
- C. Oral composition in the sense of oral self-expression:

1. Story telling
 2. Conversation
 3. Speech making
 4. Persuasive speaking
 5. Debating
 - D. Dramatics and creative dramatization:
 1. Appreciation of character and situation
 2. Bodily interpretation
 3. Vocal interpretation
 4. Problems of the stage picture
 5. Simple costuming, make-up, and scene building
 - E. Parliamentary procedure:
 1. Organizations — conduct and participation
 2. Leadership and cooperation
 3. Training of officers
 4. Criticism and discussion.
 - F. Provision for intelligent correction of defects and disorders of speech.
- WHEN?
- A. Pre-School and Kindergarten emphasis upon:
 1. Correct habits in the use of the speech mechanism
 2. Rhythm
 3. Pantomime
 4. Rhymes and jingles
 5. Repetitive stories
 6. Conversation
 - B. Primary grades — continue above, with emphasis upon:
 1. Short story telling
 2. Simple narration of personal experiences
 3. Two- or three-sentence talks
 4. Poem appreciation
 5. Simple suggestion of character
 6. Techniques of good delivery
 7. Election of officers
 - C. Intermediate grades — introduce and emphasize:
 1. Character interpretation
 2. Stage directions and terms
 3. Detailed narration
 4. Reviews and reports
 5. Jokes
 6. Persuasion
 7. Exposition
 8. Discussion of classroom problems
 9. Parliamentary procedure
 - D. Upper Grades — introduce and emphasize:
 1. Discussion of civic and national problems
 2. Informal debating
 3. Costuming
 4. Make-up
 5. Stage design
 6. Pageantry
 7. Puppetry
 8. Memorization of poetry, prose, drama.
- WHERE?
- A. The auditorium as a speech laboratory and integrating unit in platoon or departmentalized schools
 - B. The special speech classroom, aside from the speech correction clinic, where specialized courses are taught by a specially equipped teacher.
 - C. A combination of the speech classroom and laboratory, with the correlating and integrating features of the auditorium, in a room equipped with auditorium facilities.
 - D. Speech training integrated with established courses in English, language, literature, reading, spelling, music, art, physical education, health, civics, history, etc.
- BY WHOM?
- "Every Elementary Teacher a Teacher of Speech"
- A. Equipment for each teacher or adult who comes in contact with children in school:
 1. Pleasing voice quality
 2. Correct diction
 3. Accepted pronunciation
 4. Skill in oral composition
 - B. Equipment for special teachers of speech activities:
 1. A working knowledge of phonetics

Story Telling in the Speech Curriculum

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QUITE apart from the story well read, even at its best, the value of story telling has already been recognized, not only as an educational device, but as a creative art worthy of a place among other creative arts. Serious minded people have devoted whole books to the art of story telling.

Story telling in one form or another has its established place in the college curriculum. The telling of the story is considered a vital part of the training of the individual who is to deal with children. The library science and English departments are offering courses in children's literature. Thus the courses offered by the department of speech are not in full possession of the field.

If the value of story telling is recognized by up-to-date educators as an asset to the teacher it must be a general course. With the present crowded curriculum the student can ill afford the time for two courses, however valuable.

The question presents itself: How much time should be devoted to courses in story telling and should the emphasis be placed on the kind of stories to tell children, and thus be an English course, or upon the technique involved in the telling of stories and be offered in the department of speech? In other words, if the teacher knows good stories is that sufficient, or is there a technique of story telling worthy of separate study?

That there is a definite technique involved may be shown by the statement of Walter Barnes in his recent book, *ENGLISH FOR AMERICAN SCHOOLS*. "Story telling is important enough and the rewards for success are high enough to involve the spending of time, thought and energy in learning the rules and practices of the game.

You learn to tell successful stories . . . as you learn any other art . . . There is no mystery and no short cut."

If the student is to know the rewards of the well told story and the necessity for learning the "rules and the practices of the game," it would seem that the course in story telling should be a laboratory course. The statement that unless the student actually sees for himself the value of story telling he will neglect this important art may seem a foolish premise. Yet when we actually tried to find out whether teachers were telling children stories we learned that in this section of the country, at least, teachers were not.

The following methods were used to secure this information. First students in the college were asked if they could remember teachers who told them stories. Very few students were able to report any such teacher but the few who did, remembered her most vividly whether she told them well or badly. Teachers who told stories well were usually favorites, but even the college senior could remember the third grade teacher who wheezed her fairy tales.

A list of the names of well known characters, ranging from Pandora and Penelope to Don Quixote, Nicholas Nickleby and the Mad March Hare, were given one hundred and fifty college juniors with surprisingly disheartening results. Only the students with unusually cultivated families, or those from the exceptional large city schools have any sort of story background.

Emphasis on the value of story telling alone does not seem to make teachers story tellers, for even the teachers who keep in touch with the modern trend, when questioned found very plausible excuses for

neglecting the story told—"so little time," "too many children," "reading is so much easier," "stories are so well written, why tell them." Here again let me emphasize that the creative art of story telling is quite apart from the interpretative art of reading. Both have their place in the equipment of the teacher. I think you will agree with me that the teacher who tells stories well is the exception, no matter what her section of the country. It is therefore well worth while to teach our students effectively, convincing them that learning a story is valuable time well spent.

From a three year trial at Alabama College the laboratory method has proved most successful in teaching story telling. The undergraduate who has told stories from the kindergarten through the sixth grade soon learns "that the rewards for success are high enough to involve the spending of time, thought and energy" on her stories and that a story once mastered is hers, and truly a "joy forever."

You can explain to a student fifty times that she must know her story. She will prepare it as she does much of her college work—with a hasty reading. When once she has tried to tell the story of "Billy Beg and His Bull"—a fourth grade favorite—to a group of children who know by heart every situation, and has realized their utter disdain for her stumbling hesitation, the lesson is most forcefully brought home. Next time she *will* know her story.

The importance of the knowledge of background of the children to whom stories are told has been emphasized in the class. It took the laboratory experience to make it effective. An amateur, trying to begin her story naturally, asked sweetly of a village class, "How many children have ever seen a cow?" A very good question for the city child, but as practically all the boys had milked before coming to school, this innocent question was greeted with shouts of derision.

Granted it is not always easy to use laboratory methods. The practice school was far from eager to give us ten minutes each week in the first six grades. Our work might not be of enough value to

warrant a place on the schedule. The time must be well accounted for to supervisors. For two years we were on probation, but now, although our stories are not always successful, we are a permanent part of the grade school schedule.

Another laboratory method which is possible without the practice school is the story telling club. They have such a club called "The Peter Pan Club" in connection with children's literature. Each college student has her child partner and stories are exchanged between them. This, however, is a selected group. When stories are chosen by students for both eager kindergarteners and nonchalant sixth grade boys, when you learn to sit crouched on a small chair near the breathless little tots, or stand firmly, wondering if you will ever get the attention of the older children, the range of experience given by the practice school would seem to fit better actual conditions.

For the student interested in speech for children, the course in story telling makes an excellent initial course. It "tests out" the student. If she is not enthusiastic and sympathetic enough to become a good story teller she probably is not qualified as a speech teacher for children. The few girls who show exceptional ability in this course are "invited" into the course in experimental speech work for children.

Story telling has an appeal and immediate practicality for the beginning teacher. Too, if it is the only course taken it renders a permanent service in furnishing the student with an equipment for life. It is applicable in social life and the technique is transferable to the everyday story. To quote Walter Barnes again, "People who care little for other kinds of language activity are transfixed by the first words of a story. No one is so young or so aged, so ignorant or so learned that he will not listen with absorption to well told stories of real or imagined life."

We see this constantly proved in the school room. As we hurried into the fifth grade room one stormy morning the teacher gave a relieved sigh. Now was her chance for a brief moment to work on the

dreaded monthly reports. Yet though she set diligently to work she was soon caught up by the story and sat listening as intently as the children to the fairy tale about the terrible state of a prince left in a high tower in the midst of a raging sea, watching his companion ride off through the waves with the two bags of gold he had intended for himself. Actual proof to the story teller that grown-ups will listen "with absorption to a well told story of real or imagined life."

We have expanded our work this year to the nursery school. The seventh grade girls wanted stories, and as there was not time for them with our fully planned schedule the speech class in story telling volunteered to give an extra hour each week, inviting them to come to the college campus. The group was then divided and each group told stories. These were

later pantomimed for the other groups, who tried to guess the story from the pantomime. This not only helps to make the child a story teller, which it seems should be the ultimate aim of every good speech teacher, but also develops facial and bodily expressions both in the children and in the college students who try to help them. This is a necessary factor, usually so woefully lacking in most of those who really wish to tell animated stories.

Undoubtedly a knowledge of the best literature for children is essential and very often a taste for it has to be developed in the girl who will tell stories to children, but the technique involved in story telling is best taught in a laboratory course in the speech department, where the student learns to tell stories to children by telling them.

SPEECH, A SOCIAL PROBLEM

(Continued from page 32)

discipline of phonetic training until he knows the laws of English utterance as well as he knows the laws of composition and the rules of spelling. I believe also that he should have a well trained voice. Speech is the parent of literature. I believe beautiful speech should be the introduction in the schools to literature. I believe beauty makes its appeal and needs no support, and that if our young people in

the schools and the colleges throughout the land could hear our language and our literature taught by men and women of distinction of personality, in which voice and speech play no small part, half the battle for an open mind in speech would be won. The other half of the battle I would leave for environment to turn in whatever way it may.

THE ELEMENTARY SPEECH PROGRAM

(Continued from page 34)

2. Proficiency in the use of standard English
3. Appreciation of and ability to interpret prose and poetic literature
4. Understanding of children's interests in literature
5. Skill in telling stories
6. Proficiency in speech making
7. Training in the use of parliamentary law
8. Creative experience in pantomime, dramatization, pageantry, puppetry, costuming, stagecraft
9. A knowledge of music and the fundamental principles of art
10. Training in methods of speech education, including understanding of the common non-pathological defects of speech and their correction.

Radio Story Telling and the Use of Books

LOUISE GUIRAUD

WE ARE coming more and more to a realization of the very important part radio broadcasting can, and probably will, play in education. The field is new, and like all new and untested soil, must be carefully analysed to be sure there will not be too many lost harvests through too hasty judgment in the method of cultivation and presentation, and in the type of material chosen for broadcasting.

Story telling through the ages has been of unfailing and immediate appeal to all children, and is unlimited in its scope as an educational medium. We who live in a district where there is splendid cooperation between the library and the schools, with libraries in all the public high schools and in a great many of the elementary schools, perhaps feel less the need for story telling over the radio as a link in the general educational curriculum, but to the rural communities it would seem to be of inestimable value.

Many families in rural communities have radios. Would it not be possible, through the study of the state curricula, and with the cooperation of the county extension libraries, through their book wagons, to have a broadcast, let us say, at five-thirty in the afternoon? At that time the children are all at home getting ready for the evening meal, relaxed, and eager for a story.

Let it be one that is interesting and entertaining as well as one that will fit in with their school work—either the presentation of an old folk tale, the adventures of Robin Hood or the history of some other hero that their teacher has told them about in school, thus stimulating an interest in school work and making added de-

mands on the next trip of the library book wagon!

Of course the varying ages of the children would have to be considered, with certain days for certain types of stories, or definite periods for definite subjects, in this way developing a proprietary interest—"This is my story day"—in each group. The grade, rather than the age of the child to whom the story will appeal, should be stressed in order not to offend the backward child who is probably already sensitive about being in a grade with younger children.

The requests for more stories of a certain type, or about a definite hero, or any suggestions, criticisms or reactions to the programs, could come either through the teacher, the rural librarian, or direct from the listeners to the broadcaster.

This, you say, is a definite rural program, and unless on a broad hook-up, too limited in the number of persons it reaches for the amount of money expended and the amount of preparation necessary for the presentation of a good program. But is it so limited?

The broadcast must of necessity be sent from a large city and in the late afternoon reaches farther than at mid-day. We know, for instance, that during the autumn, winter and spring, local programs can be heard fifteen hundred miles to the south of us here in Pittsburgh. We are reaching innumerable children in our own "radio zone," some of whom just "like stories" and will always listen to any story; some who, for one reason or another, have not had stories in school and are not able to go to a library. We reach also a host who even with school and library story hours have never heard the particular story. All of these, through the medium of the sincere, well-

*Prepared under the direction of Miss Eugenia Brunot, Chairman of the Book Evaluation Committee of the American Library Association.

told story get an unconscious literary background of undoubted educational value.

Then there is always the adult of foreign birth who, whether rural or urban, likes to hear again the old folk and fairy tale or hero story, remembered from the old country and recalling memories dormant for years. They share these memories with their children, who in turn carry them to the boys and girls at school and to their teachers, ever opening up new vistas and educational possibilities to the broadcaster, the stimulus of reactions coming as comments on the programs.

Great care should be taken in the length of the program. Fifteen minutes seems to be the ideal time for children. It gives time for one fairly long and one short folk tale, or for one hero story, well adapted to make every word add to the vividness and dramatic quality of the story.

What Dr. Damrosch has so ably done for music through the radio, could be done for many other subjects, remembering that in the programs the broadcaster is linking up with a definite curriculum. History and geography, aside from the development and location of the country, mean the adjustment of the people who settle the country and make history in the process. The field of settlement opens up a variety of subjects: architecture, literature and all the arts. The British Isles are most fertile in their production of excellent story material. Aside from innumerable legends, folk and fairy tales, there is much history symbolized most forcefully. Take, for example, the Tower of London, with its "Lost Princes."

In France the soil is equally fertile. The heroine, Joan of Arc, the "Chateau Country," with its history of war, strife, achievement and development, and the Charlemagne legends to fire the imagination with those matchless heroes, Roland and Oliver.

Germany has its Rhine legends, and the "Wicked Bishop of Bingen," to mention only one definite story. And so on, indefinitely, with all the other countries, Spain, Italy, Russia, Scandinavia, not neglecting the delicate, rather mystic legends of China,

Japan and India, and our own United States, with its wealth of Indian legend, Negro folk lore and true stories of pioneer days, which depict the opening up of a great, new land.

Having listed the possibilities we are now ready for the concrete example of a program covering fifteen minutes of broadcasting time. In presenting a fifteen minute program, it must always be kept in mind that there are only from eleven to twelve minutes for the definite subject to be given in the broadcast.

Suppose the subject to be an English history-literature program. One minute must be given at the beginning and at the end of the program for station identification, and one minute, both at beginning and end for a folk song of the period to be stressed in the broadcast. This leaves eleven minutes for the telling of the chosen story which might well be an Arthurian legend, perhaps, "How Arthur was Crowned King." So, in the field of history, opportunities are limitless. We have folk and patriotic songs to be used as "signatures," the names of the songs and their association with the history of the country having been discussed in schools.

As another example, take geography as the subject to be presented. The teacher will depend on the broadcast to enlarge and make it more vivid to the children. The "signatures," so called, could be the national anthem of the country to be studied, followed by the telling of a legend or some true, dramatic incident. This immediately links the history of the country to its geography from which it is inseparable.

These suggestions open up inexhaustible material waiting to be used; however it must be firmly borne in mind that much good material is ruined in the presentation. A mediocre program, well organized and intelligently presented, will far outweigh in the nature of its appeal and reception the very best program badly presented. For the groups for whom a well thought-out program has been definitely planned, it fulfills its educational requirements and for the average listener a pleasant, entertaining fifteen minutes has been provided.

Creative Dramatics

As a Medium for Teaching Literature

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HUGHES MEARNS, in that price-less book, *CREATIVE POWER*, makes this true but rather caustic comment: "with characteristic hustle America has suddenly adopted creative work."

As one of those who write, teach, talk creative dramatics, I might be accused of belonging to that great class of hustling Americans who live by catchwords—if I had not anticipated the epidemic by several years! For it is unquestionably true that a great wave of creative education has quite suddenly engulfed the country. Creative music, creative dancing, creative writing—everyone is using the term. One pauses to wonder whether the feverish use of it will not prove a detriment to the fine kind of education for which it stands.

During the past few years, however, some very significant things have been happening — peculiarly significant to us as teachers of drama. Progressive schools the country over have been experimenting with certain radical theories. One hears much talk nowadays about "educating the child along the lines of his natural interests," "providing for group activities," "giving children the opportunity for creative self-expression." All of which really mean basing education on the child's play interests—on what he wants to do. Because of a widespread distrust of play, the word itself seldom appears.

Every teacher of drama who is awake to what is happening must find real inspiration in the trend which education is taking. Instead of a school curriculum based on academic subjects, there is at hand a program centered around the things in which a child is immediately interested. In place of requiring the children to con-

form to a set pattern, the progressive school encourages each child to express his own individuality, at the same time providing constant practice in the finest kind of co-operative living.

In such a school program, it requires but a small amount of insight to see the place which dramatics, particularly creative dramatics, will occupy. Frankly, education will not be able to get along without it! It is absolutely vital to the successful carrying out of the new aims.

Consider for a moment the change in attitude toward dramatics in the last five years. Most public schools of any size had dramatic courses in the high school, but how many offered creative dramatics in the elementary school? Practically none. Today, hundreds of junior high schools offer some form of dramatic work. Too often it is merely exhibitional. But judging from the number of teachers from all over the country who have been studying creative dramatics in the summer, there must be very many schools that want that type of work.

Five years ago one had to explain to any school man the meaning of the term, *creative dramatics*, telling just why this informal, non-exhibitional dramatic work was so much more educative for young children than formal drama. Many of us have gone through the period when the whole function of an amateur play was to make money for football sweaters. Even though many schools have passed that stage, practically all of them regard dramatics as constant play-rehearsing for an audience. That is why it has been so difficult to make them understand that the value of children's dramatics is not the play presented before an audience but the process of developing a play.

Only one who has watched the growth of creative dramatics from the start can appreciate the increasing respect accorded the subject by other school departments. Several months ago I heard a school superintendent address several hundred teachers at a general meeting at the opening of school in the fall. In the course of his talk, he spoke of the creative activities of the school, and after mentioning dramatics, he paused. "Speaking of dramatics," he said, "I should like to suggest that you drop in occasionally at the dramatic classes. You will see a technique used there which could well be carried into other subjects of the school."

One need make no apologies when he urges that creative dramatics be included in the program of a modern elementary school, for no subject is better fitted to carry out the aims of the new education. Indeed, it is now being used far more extensively than is generally recognized. What are primary children doing when they buy and sell in the little store they have built? What happens after a class completes a model of an Indian village? How do children best learn the intricacies of a presidential election? And what makes literature more alive than any possible amount of analysis? The answer is obvious.

Though I think there is not the slightest doubt that the schools will soon be utilizing the play spirit in teaching every subject, I believe that actual dramatization is most effective when used in the teaching of literature. For literature is the best of all subject matter for creative dramatics. It stirs the imagination; it offers a study of people such as no other material provides; it makes vivid human standards and ideals. And conversely, the literature taught by the dramatic method is the literature children love best and remember longest.

In the Evanston schools we have for seven years been introducing children to Shakespeare by way of creative dramatics. That is, we have built up an interesting background about Shakespeare and his

time, about the theatres and the plays of the period, choosing material which would be most interesting to children; we have told them the story of a play, read them certain parts to give them the flavor of the dialogue, and then developed as dramatizations, a series of scenes which they could best appreciate. In "A Midsummer Night's Dream," for instance, we use the threads of the story involving the fairies and the rustic workmen, entirely omitting in our dramatizations the entirely unsuitable love scenes, though the children are told the whole story.

It is not at all a literary approach; it is a very human one. The children know the characters as real people. They make up imaginary scenes in which these people have experiences which *could* have happened but which Shakespeare neglected to put into his plays.

And the effect? I have talked with numbers of our former students—students who are now in the township high school or have gone on to college. "Just how did you feel about studying Shakespeare in high school after your eighth grade experience?" I have asked. "Did it take away the freshness for your more detailed high school study?" Their response has been unmistakable. "It makes the plays ever so much more interesting," they say. "And we have a great advantage over the students who haven't had dramatics. We really have a contribution to make to the class." "Some of the people in the class who haven't had Shakespeare in dramatics were bored with the plays," one senior said, "but I have thoroughly enjoyed them!" Not one student have I found who was even lukewarm over what the course had meant to him.

If the study of literature counts for anything at all, it must bring pleasure and a desire to read further. And if the study of Shakespeare creates no desire to see the plays acted, it is rather a failure, is it not?

A few days ago, one of our dramatics teachers took a group of thirty-one children into Chicago to see a performance of "The Merchant of Venice," which they

had been studying. This is a common occurrence during the Shakespeare season. A young woman who happened to visit this class on the day following the performance said with conviction, "The comments of those children were all the justification needed for a course in creative dramatics!"

A group of children who had been studying "The Taming of the Shrew" went to see the Fairbanks-Pickford production, and come back disgusted with the liberties that had been taken with the text, though the grown-ups around them were delighted with the performance. "Why, even I can play Katherine more like Shakespeare wrote the character," exclaimed one little girl—a good Katherine, by the way!

People occasionally have been horrified to hear that children were allowed to make up their own dialogue in the dramatizations of the Shakespeare scenes, saying that it was no less than criminal to "mutilate" Shakespeare's beautiful lines. We have yet to hear such a criticism from people who have seen the classes at work. For the surprising thing about it is that when children are not required to memorize the lines, never have the text in their hands even, they choose phrase after phrase which they can understand and appreciate, the rhythm of which appeals to their young ears, the pictures to their imaginations, and they blend them into their simple dialogue. They sometimes play the dower scene from "King Lear," and invariably, Cordelia says in Shakespeare's words: "Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave my heart into my mouth." And in playing "The Merchant of Venice," Bassanio always says, "This is no answer, thou unfeeling man, to excuse the current of thy cruelty." And Shylock answers: "I am not bound to please thee with my answer."

Without any urging, they get nearer and nearer to the Shakespearean language, and though they are free to use only what appeals to them, they grow to have such a feeling for it that they immediately object

to any unsuitable phrase. A boy playing Hortensio in "The Taming of the Shrew" referred to Petruchio as "that kind of a guy." It happened only once! A storm of disapproval greeted that expression, as it greets every slang phrase. No word from the teacher is ever necessary. A class can be counted on to have a sense of the fitness of things, and though they may sometimes coin strange words, as when one boy said, "and other things of worthwhile mention," and another addressed the Duke as "Your Dukeship," they nevertheless can be depended upon to keep their language dignified.

The plays of Shakespeare, however, are not the only literature which gains by dramatic treatment. Beginning with Mother Goose, through folklore, balladry and modern literature, the informal playing of the stories accomplishes wonders in the way of vitalizing what is studied.

"Sir Patrick Spens," for instance, is on the required reading list of, say, a seventh grade class. As a very fine example of a type of literature that was vastly important for several hundred years, we want it to make a real impression on the group. How can this best be brought about?

Now ballads are chiefly interesting to children because of the stories they tell. The quaintness of their form appeals, it is true, but it is on the strength of what happens that they are popular with seventh graders. And their broad action is so well adapted to play form that dramatization is the logical approach to them.

So, perhaps, the teacher gives her class the opportunity of playing the story. She will not plunge into the dramatization at once if she knows her business. She will create the right mood by building up an interesting and colorful background of mediaeval castles, wandering minstrels, quaint old stories growing into songs and chants, as groups of people added one incident after another, and handed them down from generation to generation.

She will read several of the good old ballads to the class and they will talk about them, and finally choose one to

build into a play. Perhaps it will be a Robin Hood ballad. It may be "King John and the Abbot of Canterbury." Or, more than likely, it will turn out to be "Sir Patrick Spens."

They will plan the scenes they want to play, beginning with an imaginary scene, perhaps, that they may introduce the plot less abruptly and have a better chance to show the character of the people. Then a cast will be chosen and a very small bit of the first scene played. Following this, there is always the question: "What did you like about the way that scene was done?" Then: "How can we improve it?"

The criticism which follows the playing of every scene is one of the most valuable parts of the entire process of dramatization. It induces clear, logical thinking, careful character analysis, the gradual formation of a discriminating taste. Furthermore, it shows the teacher the exact degree of development that her class has reached. It is often severe but always good-natured; and the pupils, far from dreading criticism of their work, welcome it with eagerness.

One unit after another is played, until the ballad has been made into a complete play. It might be written down, made into a formal dramatization, but as a rule, it is of more value when it is kept informal and spontaneous at each playing.

Perhaps, near the close of the semester, if the class has made a particularly interesting play, it will be presented before the school assembly—without special costumes or scenery, the whole emphasis being on the work itself. Such demonstrations of the dramatics classes are extremely popular with the pupils; and they make for continually higher standards of work if the lower classes are invited in to see them.

To those of you who have experimented with creative dramatics in the teaching of literature, whether in the lower school or in the high school, I need make no explanation of the cause for its effectiveness. To those who have not seen it work, I can only say that I wish I could magically

show you a group of children who are demonstrating its use. It is so easy to convince people of its value when they actually see a class at work. Each year, when we bring a group of children over from the public schools to the School of Speech of Northwestern University to play some stories for the students, the demonstration is greeted by a burst of delighted surprise at what children can do, mixed, it must be confessed, with a feeling of rather lowered self-esteem! But if one's pleasure in the experience is not ruined by the regret that he had not such opportunities in his school days, he cannot help but be thrilled by the possibilities of the situation. The eagerness of the children, their thorough understanding of their characters and their plot, the appreciation of the idea they are setting forth—all these things go to show how alive their dramatization has made the story.

Because the dramatic method requires more time than any other, the play being a co-operative affair, developed after long discussion, analysis of character, planning of scenes and creating of dialogue, it would not be feasible to teach all literature in that way even if it were all suitable for dramatization, which it is not. Some literature depends for its effectiveness on beauty of idea or language; some, while sturdy and full of incidents, involves action which cannot be done satisfactorily—as, for instance, supernatural happenings, like Cinderella's transformations, jousting in tournaments, so important in the Arthur stories, incidents growing out of great differences in size, as in GULLIVER'S TRAVELS and many of the Norse myths. Each year, a certain few stories or scenes from stories may be chosen—stories which will gain greatly by dramatization. Worked into informal scenes, the dialogue never written down but spoken extemporaneously each time, the whole literature course can be made tremendously fascinating. Ideally, the literature and dramatic teacher are the same person for then the drama can just "happen" naturally, but since this is rarely possible except in small

private schools, the two should work in close co-operation.

And along with the increased appreciation of literature which will grow out of such a study will come still greater values. One of the finest satisfactions which can come to the teacher of creative dramatics is to see a timid child slowly unfold until his joy in the experience of expressing himself in the dramatizations makes him overcome the inhibitions which have held him back, and he becomes the most eager member of the class. Up will come his self respect, and he will take his place among his classmates with a confidence he has never felt before. Such instances are not rare; indeed they are occurring in every class. And the joy of creating always brings happiness and a richer life.

Other children learn that they must subordinate themselves for the good of the group. A child who insists on "being the whole show" finds himself very unpopular. The teacher, by subtly building up in the class a sense of proportion, brings about a fine co-operation, and the children soon come to realize that there is far more fun in working together to create a play than in trying to star alone!

Because dialogue is always made up on the spur of the moment, the children get much language practice and become very fluent in expressing themselves. In the lower classes they have had much work in voice and diction—and I wish I might tell you of some interesting experiments we have been making in that field! When they come to the upper classes such work is done indirectly, but they have by this time acquired a feeling for correct speech and it is often surprisingly good.

When I see big overgrown eighth grade boys playing with the greatest freedom a mob scene in "Julius Caesar," or eagerly seeking to be Grumio or Macbeth or Shylock, I wonder if adolescence no longer brings self-consciousness. For one can observe one eighth grade class after another and almost never see the slightest indication of that painful state. Yet this is

supposed to be the difficult period, when children are all inhibited. The explanation is that, given an opportunity to express emotion where it is perfectly legitimate to express it, boys and girls lose their fear of ridicule and become as free as younger children. Success is more certain if these children have started dramatics before the self-conscious period arrives. But it is entirely possible, if the teacher establishes a thoroughly friendly feeling in her class, to succeed even with high school people who have not had preliminary courses.

Because the teacher of creative dramatics takes care never to direct (or appear to direct) the work of the class, but keeps herself in the background, allowing her pupils to work out their own dramatizations, the children grow most surprisingly independent. I have happened in at many classes when the teacher was detained outside, perhaps by a visitor in the hall. Almost invariably the class starts without her. Someone arranges the stage, another chooses a cast, and the scene is sometimes well under way when the teacher arrives. They prove their independence, too, in assembly programs, when the home room teacher calls upon them to take the responsibility for a performance which she herself feels a bit helpless about preparing.

More than all else, perhaps, is the value which can come out of the discussions of motives and actions of the people in the plays. Subtly, indirectly, a teacher can guide her class so that right attitudes and fine standards will grow out of the discussions which are always so live a part of a well taught dramatic class.

The claims for creative dramatics sound extravagant. They are not. I have had the chance in seven years to see all these things happen again and again. I have faith in its values. Inside of ten years, I predict a tremendous change in the status of dramatic training in the public schools. Education is moving in that direction. There is being made for creative dramatics constantly a more significant place.

Switzerland and America in Pageantry

DOROTHY DE COZA

Children's Librarian, Outer Gratiot Branch

Detroit Public Library

A FOREST glade, with majestic trees towering above rustic Swiss chalets clustered around an ancient well, lay in a valley at the foot of the Alps with the great Jungfrau in their midst. Carried through the air were the sounds of the distant music of sonorous horns and peasant songs when a company of mountaineers came trooping down the steep path. Such was the background, with the sun filtering through the leafy boughs of the trees, of Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell" pageant given at Interlaken, Switzerland, during the past summer. The village children ran out of the cottages with cries and huzzahs to meet the sojourners. As these peasants came down the hillside driving the cattle which had been fattening on the high rocky meadows, and as they trundled the great cheeses, the old world theme gained reality. The quaint garb of the men, of the women, of the children, further enchanted an audience carried back to the days of the ancient mountain drama. This was a picture which could hardly be surpassed in beauty of setting and historical significance.

After the colorful opening scene the drama progressed from the schemings and plottings of the Hapsburgs, the hateful arrogance and cruelty of Governor Gessler, to the open rebellion of the people, and their freedom won from the yoke of tyranny. There were tense moments when the Alpine hat of Governor Gessler was placed on a pole in the market place, when the people understood that they must bow to this symbol of power, and when Wilhelm Tell, unwittingly, neglected to

do homage to this sign. The climax of the pageant, familiar to the world, was the shooting of the apple from the head of Tell's son. The hated governor dominated the group of nobles seated on their fine horses and dressed in rich and brilliant attire. The peasants from all the cantons must have been gathered in the town, for low, vindictive murmurings or even words of anger broke from a multitude. The village people plainly showed their fear for the life of the boy and their hatred for such an act of cruelty and violence. The suspense was as great as it would have been had the audience not known the outcome.

A drama, certainly living for the afternoon, was being played for an audience who were sheltered under the trees. The pageant, enacted by the people of Interlaken and surrounding villages, was a national heritage and yet, in spite of the familiarity, whether the sun shone or the clouds dripped their discomfort, the seats were crowded and the people were expectant. To the few tourists the stage possessed unusual artistry of nature but it was not unique to those who had traveled from the corners of that small country. This production was not to be ended in one summer. Much as the "Landing of the Pilgrims" might be repeated each Thanksgiving in the United States, so the loyalty of the Swiss people will bring them summer after summer to live again, with renewed pride, through the stirring days of their nation's beginnings.

As one left the outdoor theatre, after having seen a gorgeous display on the side of the Swiss mountain, appreciation of the pleasure and value derived therefrom was quickly followed by the thought, "Why

*This article was prepared under the direction of Miss Harriet W. Leaf, as Chairman of the Book Evaluation Committee of the Section for Library Work with Children of the American Library Association in 1931-1932.

not in America?" What an enormous country we live in when Switzerland is our comparison! What beauty of landscape and majestic scenery is our own heritage! What a colorful background for a short span of history. And there are our people! Few nations have more to draw upon for participators in a pageant or potential audiences. Surely such an opportunity to use our unlimited resources of nature and man should be a stimulus to produce, again and again, a bit of living artistry. If we want to build up such a heritage for our nation's children the school is the logical place to create a pageant. Many fine plays have been enacted by school children, east and west, north and south.

Drama has a recognized educational value. Even there the scope of that merit carries us into many channels. Such a play as "Wilhelm Tell" is a focal point of discussion. Historically it is potent. Dramatically it is a living portrayal of something done so well that it becomes art. From a literary and musical point of view, as an education in beauty it has a value which cannot be measured. A pageant will be remembered by the audience. It will never be forgotten by the cast.

To say that there is a wealth of beauty in the natural surroundings of our country does not take into consideration the schools situated upon our city streets where scenic loveliness is buried in dusty pavements or the strip of blue sky is hidden by factories. Even the enjoyment of quiet is shattered by the din of traffic. Yet some urban schools are honored with an extent of yard and grounds where trees have been planted and growing shrubs and flowers fostered. There is also the playground. Though it be without grass it might still be turned into a background for an outdoor production. Most picturesque of all are the city parks wherein a whole city or a section of a city could produce a Robin Hood fête, an historical drama, a fairy tale romance. Varying methods of distributing the labor and

dividing the effort might be achieved. If each school participating were to be responsible for a scene or an act, neither the work nor the expense entailed would prohibit. For such a community project these parks are ideal settings even though the pools are artificial or the trees less gnarled than those in the greenwood.

The subjects for festivals are again limitless. Plays based on incidents of bygone days are the most numerous, and a picture of such dramatic events should perhaps be given greatest consideration. Many pageants not only give a panoramic view of historical events but are also valuable for their local significance. Then too there is material on world history and customs — an aid in orientation. The Robin Hood or King Arthur stories have a wealth of pageantry in their pages. Myths and legends hold an equal charm of romance and an equal opportunity for artistic effects. What boy or girl, what mother or father, what grandparent would not look upon folklore or fairy lore as a welcome recess from the mêlée of intermittent electric flashes and radio noise; such a performance carries the audience back to the days when their minds welcomed romance.

Last—but extremely important — are the books of plays and dramas which are almost necessary to a production. It is of course true that if there be an incipient playwright in one's midst, any story may be adapted with success. The lines do not need to be the language of the poet nor of the dramatic writer. If the English is simple and natural it can be handled adequately by youthful actors. In an "Alice in Wonderland" pageant, a festival of Maeterlinck's "Blue Bird" or in a Mother Goose fantasy the phraseology of the author may easily be lifted from the pages of the story. However, books on pageantry are valuable, adapted as they are to enable boys and girls to become John Alden, Sacagawea, or Peter Pan. A list of these books would not only be far too great to use in a short article but the American Library Association has published one

Editorial

Sources and Patterns in Creative Writing

IN the teaching of creative writing, two problems are outstanding. One of these relates to the *sources of expression* or to literary origins, and the other to patterns or *forms of expression*.

There is, of course, the danger of thwarting or destroying the spirit of creativeness by undue emphasis upon either of these. Nevertheless, to insure proper guidance and intelligent direction of the teaching processes, both the sources of creative expression and the patterns and forms of this expression must be well considered factors in the right curriculum development.

Regardless of what a teacher may actually say to the pupil or regardless of any effort he may make to arouse in the pupil greater consciousness or to intensify the pupil's consciousness of matters relating to sources of expression or literary origins, the teacher certainly must, himself, proceed with considerable awareness of these as factors in his teaching procedure. For example, small James, in response to a mood that has taken possession of him, because of some seasonal influence, Christmas, Hallowe'en or the first bright day of spring, begins to write. The teacher who endeavors to quicken James' composition processes by way of reflective thinking or clearer ideation is likely to spoil the mood and unduly change or thwart its expression. Let it be taken for granted, in this instance, that James' writing is essentially a composition of an emotion or mood, the expression of which is quite sensitive to environmental conditions and easily destroyed by emphasis on ideas or thought. In other words, both in what a teacher refrains from doing and in what he does to assist or encourage the young writer, it is essential that he give attention to questions concerning sources of expression or literary origins.

With all due respect for the anxiety of

those persons who fear the results of formalism upon creative teaching, something must be said for technique and matters of form pertaining to creative expression. Form is not something superimposed or something foreign to typical experiences in composition. There is not only a lyric mood but concomitantly a lyric form. The Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens is not only a ballad in spirit and theme, but in form and convention as well. The confluence of all these elements makes the poem. Longfellow, in the fervor of a ballad mood and under the inspiration of a ballad situation could write "The Wreck of the Hesperus," because he was equipped through literary experience and training with form elements adequate to the right expression of this mood. It is quite possible too, that during the period of the composition of this poem, he had no consciousness of form conventions in the construction of the ballad. Edgar Allan Poe utilized in the composition of "The Raven," the stanza form and other structural elements of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Lady Geraldine's Courtship." In doing this, however, he wrote not without originality in many other important respects.

The whole point to be emphasized is that matters of form have definitely and concretely a place in the teaching of creative writing. Problems arising therefrom are varied, it is true, and ends to be attained widely different. Under some conditions it may be important to teach a form convention for purposes of immediate satisfactory expression; under other conditions the teaching of form conventions may be solely a matter of deferred values or in anticipation of a time when the form, once having been apperceived, may quite spontaneously become the mould of creative expression, or tributary to it.

C. C. Certain

(Continued from page 28)

informal but by no means unsophisticated.

From Norway and Sweden and Holland and Denmark come some of the loveliest soft colors. It is as if the greyness had toned the colors; they are rich but more quiet. And there seem to be more books about the children themselves. They glorify the home life and the family, but they are not sentimental. There is great dignity about them, but they have no sense of stiffness and they are full of an amused appreciation of children shared with the children themselves.

From France and Switzerland come some of the classic peasant picture books and some of the most gorgeous historical picture books. They are perhaps more intellectual, if I may use the word, and more objectively adventurous. They make the great names of history familiar to small children.

From Germany comes the father of all the comics, and charming toy and play and song books, with some of the most interesting experiments in makeup and color printing.

From England comes a lovely long line that is familiar to us all because blessedly written in our own language. From the

older ones we get the stir of Old England, the country life with its hunting and merry-making, its fairs and its pageants. We get the honest philosophy, the native wit, and the indispensable joy of nonsense. And then the adoption of the small animals into the child's own world, the busy friendliness of it all, and the beauty of the English countryside.

I would like to trace the influence of all these picture books on the books that we are producing in this country, to show how there is really no foreign literature in one sense because these books all belong intimately to some great part of our own people and so are part of the foundation of our own literature and necessary for the fullest education of our children.

But all I can do is to suggest the richness of the field and call attention to the very interesting list *CHILDREN'S BOOKS FROM TWELVE COUNTRIES*. It gives a careful selection of all types of books with notes to help in the selection. It was prepared by a committee of the Children's Section of The American Library Association under the chairmanship of Mary Gould Davis of the New York Public Library. Published in 1930, it is the best guide.



SWITZERLAND AND AMERICA IN PAGEANTRY

(Continued from page 46)

which is compiled by Aeola Hyatt, entitled *INDEX TO CHILDREN'S PLAYS*. The titles listed include material on staging, costumes and effective means of production, as well as a great many plays, pageants and festivals. Some of these are simple, others more elaborate but the simple ones may be amplified or the elaborate ones made less pretentious by a clever director.

In our schools today, there are many of these clever directors. It is upon their ability to train young and eager actors that the success of such a performance rests. Many schools have produced pageants. Many communities have inspired their citizens with such a spectacle, and yet the surface of opportunity has scarcely been touched.